Improved and Sustainable Livestock Health Service Delivery options in the Ghibe valley

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A report for COMART Foundation

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Preface

This report gives the products of recent work on “Improved and Sustainable Livestock Health Service Delivery options in the Ghibe valley”.

It covers the view of various stakeholders on how the problem of sustainable animal health services delivery could be addressed. It may not provide complete coverage of all aspects of the problem. However it is hoped that the recommendations will be of help for future sustainable control of tsetse and trypanosomosis that the project undertakes.

The report has been organized and prepared by members of the study team: Drs. Berhanu Gebremedhin, Jabbar Mohammad, and Woudyalew Mulatu.

In addition to the core members Dr. John McDermott and Mr. Bruce Scott of ILRI made significant contributions to this project. We are grateful for their continued support for the success of this program. Many farmers and other input suppliers have also actively attended the fieldwork and workshops. They are acknowledged collectively for their great courtesy and hospitality they showed.

Many thanks go to COMART Foundation form Canada for its financial support to promote this project.

We are also grateful to Wereda BoA and Service cooperatives promotion offices for assigning their staff to take part in the workshops and in assisting organizing farmers.
Summary

Farmers in the Ghibe valley encountered the problem of tsetse and the trypanosomosis as one of the major constraints of livestock and crop production. They had been experiencing dramatic losses of their cattle due to this disease. A few dozen of farmers used to live in the area, scratching out a living based on hand-tilled plots of land.

A successful attempt to control the disease and the vector has been made by ILRI with active participation of the community using pour-on pyrethroid insecticide treated cattle. The treatment showed remarkable success and human life in the valley improved significantly.

A series of consultations were held with various stakeholders to identify suitable options or mechanisms for sustainable delivery of such animal health services in the Ghibe valley.

The workshop participants considered ILRI’s approach and agreed to form farmers’ cooperatives as one of the first options to handle the problem of sustainability of animal health input delivery in the area.

Four organizing committees of 5 members were elected in four sites. The main duties of the committee are to mobilize and register members, collect membership and contribution fees, develop by-laws/ guidelines, call a general meeting to approve the draft by-law, and elect executive committee members for the cooperative.

Farmers agreed to pay Birr 10.00 for membership and 50.00 as a contribution towards the initial revolving fund to buy the necessary drugs.

After registration, collection of initial membership and contribution fees, development of the by-law and the cooperative officially registers, the group will be in a position to directly negotiate with credit suppliers.

Registration, membership fee collection and by-law developments are still in progress in the four sites.
1. Introduction

Animal trypanosomosis is a parasitic disease that hampers livestock production and agricultural development in the western and southern parts of Ethiopia. Some 13-15% of the country is infested with tsetse flies, the major vector of trypanosomosis, and an estimated 14 million cattle are at risk of being infected with the disease (Langridge, 1976).

In Ghibe, livestock in general and cattle in particular play an important role in small holders’ economy. They are used for draft power/land preparation, crop threshing and to obtain nourishment from meat and milk, but because of the risk of trypanosomosis they have been unable to penetrate the potentially rich agricultural lowlands. Farmers in this valley have been experiencing dramatic losses of their cattle mainly due to tsetse transmitted trypanosomosis since early 1980s.

The communities served by the project fall under four different woredas in two regional governments. They are in the periphery of each of these woredas, which are not easily accessible from the woreda headquarters, so are not regularly and adequately served by the woreda veterinary offices and clinics. As the result very little has been done to alleviate this problem.

In 1986/87 a few farmers lived in this valley, scratching out a living based on hand-hoe tilled plots of land. Infrastructures like road; schools etc. were poorly developed.

To day the area is inhabited by an estimated 14000 households and more than 35000 heads of cattle. Schools for children and clinics have been opened.

The primary cause for the increase in human and livestock population in the area is the impact of the research trial to control tsetse fly and trypanosomosis challenge using pour-on insecticide treated cattle by the International Livestock Centre for Africa (ILCA), now International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in 1990/91. The insecticide is applied on the back line of the animals once every month. Cattle herds freely move around grazing land and facilitate the contact of the flies with insecticide. The insecticide is harmless to mammals, to most invertebrates and the environment. It kills or knocks down bloodsucking flies that land to feed on the treated animals.

Initially, ILCA/ILRI was providing the pour-on insecticide free of charge as part of the research. In 1992 many people from outside of the control area began to come to the distribution points to demand that their animals also be treated and to pay for the treatment. ILCA responded positively and four additional pour-on distribution points were opened and at the same time cost recovery charges introduced. Since then, farmers have been paying the cost of the drug without service charges.

Farmers in the project area are organised into a group around a crush, where monthly pour-on administration is provided. A representative farmer in each group takes responsibility to organise for and inform the group about the date of drug administration.

The pour-on treatment trial has shown remarkable success and human life in the Ghibe Valley has improved significantly during the last decade, mainly due to the control of the tsetse fly population and the disease it transmits to cattle. Controlling trypanosomosis therefore is a prerequisite for the overall development of the area. The prospect for dairy production is also high, once the disease can be put under control.

However, natural resource degradation, especially deforestation, degradation of grazing lands are emerging as important problems. The deterioration of soil fertility is likely to emerge as one of major problems in the near future, because of new settlement programs by the government. Hence, the time is ripe for integrated approaches towards disease control improving the livelihoods of Ghibe farmers and sustainable management of the natural resources to be developed and adopted.

While farmers in the project area are willing to pay and continue to use the pour-on to protect their animals, the problem is to find a sustainable mechanism that will allow continued access to quality drugs and its proper supervision and administration once ILRI withdraws from these functions, and also to make these services accessible to other communities beyond the current project areas.
In order to identify suitable options for accessing the drug and health services and their management, a series of consultations were held with various stakeholders: farmers, suppliers and providers of various inputs and services including government agencies, non-government agencies, private sector operators, research and extension agencies.

Hand-hoe cultivation

Ghibe Valley
2. Study area

The study was conducted in the Ghibe valley situated in about 185 km (Lower Ghibe) and 230km (Upper Ghibe) west of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. It is one of the areas infested with tsetse flies the major vector of livestock disease called trypanosomosis.

The altitude of the valley floor is 1050 m.a.s.l with the escarpments on either side rising to 1700 m.a.s.l. There are two rainy seasons; short rains occurring during February to April followed by long rains during June to September. It has an average monthly maximum and minimum temperature of 37 and 10 c° respectively. The mean annual rainfall for the area is 500- 1000mm. (EMA, 1988)

The majority of the community members practice subsistence small-scale mixed crop and livestock farming. With fertile soils, and relatively adequate rainfall and soil moisture, crop production is very profitable.

Maize is the most important crop in the area; followed by sorghum and teff. Most of the crop produced is sold in the market.

Oxen power used mainly for land preparation and crop threshing remains the most important determinant of crop yields. The livestock species raised in the valley are mainly cattle, followed by goats, sheep, donkeys and chicken. The cattle population in this valley including bordering areas is over 250,000. They are mainly of Small East African Highland Zebu type. Donkeys play crucial role in transporting crops to market and water for domestic use.

Vegetation in the area changes with altitude and rainfall but is dominated by wooded grasslands. The grasslands are dominated by Acacia and Ficus species. The landscape is covered mainly by black soil. (Reid et al, 1997)

3. Objective of consultation workshops

The purpose of the consultative workshops was:

- To establish priority institutional options for sustainable animal health services delivery as determined by community members,
- To identify the most appropriate livestock health delivery mechanisms, their constraints and requirements (credit, extension services, farmers organizations, trainings etc.) for sustainable animal health input delivery,
- To identify the possible role of the community in this program.

3.1. Community workshops

Community workshops were conducted during 3-6 February 2003 at four sites in the Ghibe Valley (two in lower Ghibe and two in upper Ghibe) where ILRI has been conducting tsetse/trypanosomosis control trials.

The ultimate objective of the workshop was to come up with priority institutional options for the sustainable delivery of animal health services as determined by the community members.

Workshop participants were selected to represent different wealth classes, age groups, gender and administrative responsibilities in the peasant associations (PAs)

The sites were selected based on representative ness of tsetse/trypanosomosis challenge and participation of community members in ILRI’s vector control trial project. Each workshop took one day and farmers were served with lunch and refreshments in order to facilitate their uninterrupted participation. About 30 farmers participated in the workshop at each site. At each workshop site participants were split into sub-groups in order to allow adequate opportunities for each participant to contribute to the identification of priority institutional options. The whole group then met in a plenary session to decide on the top three priorities.
3.2. Input and service providers’ workshop

A one-day workshop on Institutional and Organisational Support for Improved and Sustainable Livestock Health Services Delivery in the Ghibe Valley was held at ILRI Addis Ababa on 9 September 2003. All institutions involved in animal health, especially on tsetse/trypanosomosis, control input supplies or services provisions in Ethiopia were invited for this workshop.

The objectives were to identify appropriate livestock health delivery mechanism(s) in the Ghibe valley, and constraints and requirements (credit services, extension, farmer organisations, training, etc) for the sustainable delivery of animal health services.

A total of 19 participants from various private companies, officials from Bureau of Agriculture (BoA), and micro-credit offices of the neighbouring districts for Ghibe valley, desk heads of cooperatives association, a drug vendor, and ILRI scientists attended the workshop. At this workshop the results and agreements reached by the earlier 4 community workshops were presented to all participants. The participants were divided into two working groups to discuss and make specific recommendations for the supply of drugs and their supervision and administration when ILRI hands over the project.

3.3. Farmers’ workshop

On 31 October 2003, a total of 24 representative farmers, including two women from four woredas and several ILRI staff attended a farmers’ workshop at Wolkite, near Ghibe.

The objective of this workshop was to present and discuss the summary of previous workshop results held with input suppliers and service providers.

3.4. Farmers’ and input suppliers’ joint workshop

The next day, on 1 November 2003, 43 participants including suppliers, farmers from the workshop the day before, officials from Bureau of Agriculture (BoA), and micro-credit offices of the neighbouring districts around Ghibe valley, officials of cooperatives matters, a drug vendor, a representative from national project of Farming In Tsetse Controlled Area (FITCA) and ILRI scientists attended a joint workshop. The main purpose of this joint workshop was to bring the
different parties together to discuss and identify possible and common options on sustainable delivery
of animal health services in the Ghibe valley. The outcome of the farmers’ workshop the day before
was shared with the group.

Joint workshop participants at Wolkite town

4. Highlights of the results of the workshops

4.1 Community workshops

Alternative institutional options for sustainable delivery of livestock health services provided the main
focus of community workshops.

The workshops revealed that the majority of farmers in the Ghibe area are settlers who migrated from
the northern, central and southern Ethiopian highlands in search of more fertile land. Currently, the
average household size is about six. Approximately 6% of household heads are women. Lack of
roads, access to markets and lack of credit are important development problems. Water-borne
diseases, malaria and tuberculosis (TB) are the major human health problems. Due to the high and
humid temperature post harvest losses due to pests are also a serious problem. However, soils are
reasonably fertile and crop production is profitable.

Cultivated and grazing lands are the two major land use types in the area. Farmers’ perceive their land
tenure to be secure, except in the lower Ghibe valley near the Ghibe State farm, where farmers fear
the state farm might acquire their land. Average land holding in the area is 5 hectares. Land leasing,
mainly in the form of sharecropping, is commonly practised.

Except for the existence of Peasant Associations (PAs), formal farmer organizations such as credit
and saving associations, and marketing cooperatives are limited. Informal farmer organizations such
as ‘Equb’ (equivalent to rotation saving and credit), ‘Idir’ (funeral and emergency self-help) and
others are commonly used. Farmers do not have access to formal credit sources and rely on informal
sources to meet their credit needs. Agricultural extension service, especially for livestock production,
is limited. Crop marketing is an important function in the area since about 70% of crop produce is
sold. Selling livestock and livestock products is limited.
The need for and the benefits from farmer organizations such as marketing co-operatives and credit associations are high. However, no such formal organizations exist, nor has effort been put into establishing them.

According to farmers, the issue of livestock health service in the area is a matter of life and death for the farming community and so could not be left to private providers, who may have their own profit motives. Participants also expressed their perception of the adverse effect of drugs bought from unlicensed local vendors.

Table 1 presents the priority options identified in each workshop site and their rankings at each site.

Based on the results of this participatory consultation communities prefer to establish their own management of a livestock health service delivery. Farmers would organize themselves in a service cooperative and elect a committee that would oversee the day-to-day activities of the health post, procurement of health and other consumer goods, farm inputs and marketing of outputs.

The second priority choice of farmers, their desire for ILRI’s service to continue, indicates the recognition among farmers of the benefits ILRI’s service in the area. Training of community members in animal health services management was considered to be the third priority option and as part of the establishment of sustainable health post.

Overwhelmingly, farmers are of the opinion that they urgently need an institutional set up for the sustainable delivery of livestock health services under their control and management. The majority of farmers expect ILRI to play a crucial role in the establishment of livestock health posts, training of health technicians and establishment of a pharmacy where farmers could buy drugs at cost.

<table>
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<th>Priority options identified</th>
<th>Site 1 Ranking</th>
<th>Site 2 Ranking</th>
<th>Site 3 Ranking</th>
<th>Site 4 Ranking</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
<th>Overall Ranking</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>ILRI facilitates establishment of health post and helps train livestock health technicians and the set-up of a pharmacy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We prefer ILRI to continue its service indefinitely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training be given to members of the community on animal health service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILRI co-ordinates its activities with Bureau of Agriculture and gradually transfers its service to the Bureau without disruption of the service</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
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Table 1: Identification and ranking of priority options for health delivery by each site and overall (3= highest rank)

There are experiences in establishing and managing community based livestock health services in the near-by areas. The Food for the Hungry International (FHI) and the Ethiopian Social Rehabilitation and Development Fund (ESRDF) have helped other farmers groups establish community based health posts, train health technicians at Agricultural Research Centers and set up a pharmacy. They have provided revolving funds amounting Ethiopian Birr 40,000 (FHI) and Birr 60,000 (ESRDF) to service...
cooperatives in their operational areas for the purchase of drugs and other laboratory and field supplies.

4.2. Input and service providers’ workshop

In this workshop participants suggested three different alternatives:

**Community Managed Animal Health Service**

**Alternative 1:** Community managed animal health service

The above assessment was considered with a number of health posts situated within one of the Woredas, Abeshige (three given as are examples on the above figure) and a number of crushes per health post.

The essence of this approach is that the government veterinary health post will take supervisory responsibility for the crushes within its mandate area or if it currently not within its mandate, the nearest crush would be put under its supervision. For this system to function, a number of requirements would need to be met. At the health post level, there is a need for:

1. A revolving fund to purchase drugs and supplies to users before payments can be recovered;
2. Either the drugs will be supplied by the BoA Veterinary clinic or by private drug suppliers.
3. Farmers groups (usually composed of 10 farmers), as organised elsewhere for fertiliser credit purposes, could be set up and used as a functional group for drug supply and use.
4. Veterinary technicians, bicycles, veterinary equipments, office, and residence for the technicians at the new health post (field assistants currently operating in the ILRI project might require retraining to comply with government regulatory requirement. Moreover, community based health worker concept was not acceptable to the Woreda Veterinary clinic/officer).

The identified constraints to adopt this approach include:

1. Current ILRI crushes are too far from the Woreda clinic and health posts (some are up to 20 km away);
2. Lack of transport facilities at current health posts to reach the crushes;
3. Lack of operational cost to cover transport and purchase of drugs;
4. No private drug vendor available in some areas, if drugs are to be supplied by that option;
5. Inadequate local stock of drugs by vendors (due to cash problem and low purchasing power of farmers);
6. Lack of awareness of vendors of drugs for humans about the new government rule that they can also stock certain veterinary drugs;
7. Irregularity of supply of pour-on insecticides from suppliers in Addis Ababa.

Cash flow was found as a major constraint for some farmers as crop sales occur at particular times in the year while drug costs were required regularly every month. Crop storage is a major problem that encourages sales of crops at harvest time when prices are low. Assuming credit supply could be a mechanism to overcome this constraint, the following options were considered:
1. Drug vendors could access credit from drug suppliers (supply of drugs on credit for at least one purchase cycle) or get credit from local finance agencies to purchase drugs. Both options were reported to be difficult under current circumstances.

2. Farmers could access credit for drug purchasing
   - From micro-finance agencies – but none of the agencies currently has veterinary drugs in their credit portfolio.
   - From service cooperatives - but farmers are not yet organised into cooperatives to take this route.
   - Government credit agencies - but such agencies require suitable collaterals, and it is not clear what might be suitable for veterinary drug credit;
   - Endowment/grant from an agency/foundation equivalent to start the revolving fund, but there is no potential source for such endowment fund or grant known to date.

Alternative 2: Private sector

The essence of this approach was that the supply of drugs should be left to the private sector, both local and wholesale supply.

Two options were suggested:

1. Where cash was not a problem for farmers to buy drugs, private sector could be easily promoted with regulatory and training support;
2. Where finance was a big constraint for farmers to buy drugs, creating farmers’ cooperatives might help.

However, at all levels of animal health delivery system regulation by BoA has to be in place. Moreover, the extension service of the BoA needs to be strengthened.

Alternative 3: Community-Based Animal Health Workers (CBAHW)

In pastoral areas this system works well as the health workers are given initial capital to buy drugs and deliver them to users. However, this option was not seen as viable in the Ghibe valley for many reasons, the serious one being the policy of the Regional States, which does not recognise CBAHW or Paravets as legal service providers to practise in the region.

Although no decision was made on the presented approaches the input and service providers made the following recommendations on what needs to be achieved before one of these alternatives is put in place.

3. It is strongly felt that the BoA would need to control and regulate the community- based animal health service, if that option is adopted
4. Community animal health service should be managed by the service cooperatives
5. There is a need to encourage private sector to supply drugs.
6. Credit is an essential input, which would be provided as a revolving fund or an initial endowment fund to the farmer groups.
7. Training of animal health technicians would be required, giving refresher courses (by BoA, ILRI, other education institutions such as FITCA)
8. There would be a need to facilitate transport for the movement of Woreda health staff, especially veterinary assistants based at health posts.
9. There would be a need to strengthen animal health regulatory services in order to control drug adulteration, and abuses at all levels.

4.3 Joint workshop

Since the farmers had highlighted the formation of groups or associations as important, a detailed guideline for forming an association was presented by a representative of the Service co-operative office. He described that any association should have a legal status and meet the following criteria: have a by-law pay registration and contribution fees (as agreed by the interest group), a minimum
running finance, at least 5 committee members, and a proposal. Once these are met, it takes only few days to issue a license and give the association a legal status.

Micro-finance institutions explained their activities and experiences to the participants including giving credit, facilitating savings and counselling. They give credit along with the BoA to associations and institutions. They expressed their willingness to assist associations developed at Ghibe.

Woreda BoA representatives appreciated the idea of forming associations for this would facilitate the work of BoA in livestock health delivery system.

A summary of the joint workshop is as below:

- There was a need to form farmers’ associations.
- Committees of at least 5 to 7 members (chairman, secretary, financial controller, auditor, and 3 members) should be established with their specific duties and responsibilities.
- Farmers must raise their own funds by contributing seed money before seeking any additional external assistance.
- Farmers will pay money for the service they get (according to the number of animals treated).
- Financial management will be delegated to three committee members after an association attained its legal status, and established with official procedure.
- Training on both financial management (e.g. bookkeeping) and basic livestock health delivery techniques would be needed by committee members.
- Farmers should be allowed to take credit through their association when and as required and payback appropriately. For this the association would need technical support and training from credit organizations.
- ILRI to assist the process of association establishment until an association is able to stand on its own feet.
- Technical assistance to be provided by BoA in checking and controlling drug quality (e.g. expiry date) and during the establishment of health posts.

A steering committee was formed to organise the village group meetings. One representative from each of the following was nominated:

- Rural Development Bureau of Woredas,
- Service co-operative promotion Office of the Woredas,
- Livestock & fisheries desk of the BoA (Animal Health Team for Sokoru Woreda),
- Farmers,
- ILRI would act as facilitator for organising the meetings.

Since these workshops various meetings in the selected village have been organised to form organizing committees. Various Woreda offices have been represented in these meetings and the office responsible for Service co-operatives promotion has taken the lead in explaining group/association formation procedure and helping farmers to follow the proper legal procedures. Officers from different Woredas have also attended these meetings. Such cooperative effort among government offices is a new initiative in the area. Five organizing transitional committees have been formed in five communities, three in the Lower (Ghibe Gurage, Ghibe Sokoru, Borer) and two in the upper Ghibe (Gullele, Medallo) each covering several hamlets or villages.

The main functions of the elected transitional committees have been agreed:

1. To register members,
2. To collect membership and contribution fees,
3. To develop guidelines and a constitution for the association,
4. To call for a general meeting to discuss the draft proposal for approval and for submission to Woreda office for registry, and
5. To elect executive committee for the cooperative.
6. Farmers through their registration and contribution fees have already contributed a total of Birr 10,000. Such fund raising is still in progress.

Farmers contribution

5. Discussions

Farmers in the Ghibe valley are well aware of the role ILRI played in improving their livelihoods, through controlling the tsetse population and trypanosomosis. Due to the crucial role of livestock, especially oxen, in the livelihoods of farmers in the area, the level of control of the tsetse population and the prevalence of trypanosomosis can be said to be the most important indicator of the welfare of the farming community in Ghibe.

Following the workshops there are signs that farmers have been developing the capacity to sustain the control program themselves. One of these is the successful election of their organizing committees, raising funds through registry and contributions to purchase supplies. In all of the sites farmers have agreed to pay Birr 10 for membership and at least Birr 50 for contribution towards the initial revolving fund to buy the necessary veterinary drugs. In the workshop farmers also had opportunities to identify possible collaborators, such as BoA, micro-finance, Service cooperative promotion office and drug suppliers. Initial steps have been undertaken to involve these agencies.

The results of the workshops demonstrate willingness of farmers and input/service providers to work together. In the suppliers workshop other organisations also expressed their interest in helping farmers to solve their problems with tsetse flies and animal trypanosomosis. The suppliers are looking for ways to deliver their products to farmers in the most effective and profitable ways. They are already marketing thousands of doses of trypanocidal drugs and providing synthetic pyrethroids for tsetse control trials in other tsetse infested regions of the country including Ghibe.
Once the functions of transitional committees completed, and officially registration has been done, these groups will be able to directly negotiate with drug suppliers for direct supply of drugs, and organise drug administration under the supervision of government bureau of agriculture.

However farmers are lacking skills in bookkeeping, running a bank account, planning, controlling activities, and keeping records etc. For these purpose efforts are underway by ILRI and the community to identify persons from each group who will be trained in bookkeeping, drug handling etc.

Establishment of a sustainable credit service in the area is likely to be a requirement for the success of the community managing animal health delivery and services in the area.

Farmers in the four workshops deliberated at length on the alternative institutional options for the sustainable delivery of livestock health services, especially for the control of tsetse and trypanosomosis. They were overwhelmingly of the opinion that communities need to be involved in the management and administration of the delivery of the health service and on a day-to-day basis.

6. Future Plans

Follow-up activities by ILRI, BoA, Service Co-operative promotion office and community include:

- Continue facilitating the community to elect their executive committee.
- Provide technical assistances and support to the community to mobilize/organize and encourage as many individual farmers and groups as possible to involve and invest in tsetse/trypanosomosis control programs and stand on their own.
- Assist the community to prepare annual operational plans. One of these will be continuation of the activities that ILRI has been doing.
- Training of the executive committee members in managing their organization, in safe use of drugs, sales collection etc involving government and private sectors,
- Training of individual farmers elected by the committee to provide treatments to animals (pour-on)
- Monitor and evaluate the sustainability of tsetse/trypanosomosis control by the community,
- Maintain monitoring of sentinel herds to record productivity and trypanosome prevalence and traps to monitor tsetse populations,
- In collaboration with other stakeholders consider opportunities for scaling up (both within and outside the area) of community managed animal health service delivery.
- Develop a network between communities in different sites to allow farmers and other stakeholders to learn from each other.